

MEDIA OUTREACH



3



MEDIA
OUTREACH

PAIRING YOUR MESSAGE TO THE RIGHT AUDIENCE

3



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Why media outreach?

One of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to inform members of the community about the Food Stamp Program (FSP) is through local television, radio, and newspapers.

What is media outreach?

Media outreach takes many forms — from a simple call to a reporter to suggest a story, to a formal press release or an organized event. All can be effective. Match your media efforts to what works best in your community.

Why would the media be interested in covering Food Stamp Program issues?

There are many compelling sides to the food stamp story. It is about the strength of a local community working together to help those who are less fortunate. It is about people facing challenges and doing what is right for themselves and their families. It has all the elements of an interesting story that local media want to cover. Your local media have both a community responsibility and a business interest in providing readers and viewers with valuable information.

What does media outreach involve?

Media outreach consists of the following seven steps:

1. **SELECT** a target audience.
2. **DEVELOP** a media list.
3. **BRAINSTORM** story ideas.
4. **PREPARE** materials and information.
5. **IDENTIFY** spokespersons.
6. **CONTACT** the media.
7. **EVALUATE** your efforts.

You may not have the time or resources to follow every step. The important thing is to keep the media informed about what you are doing so they can get the word out to eligible people in your community that food stamp benefits are available to them.

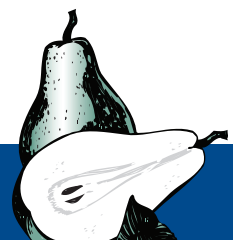
How will this toolkit help me with media outreach?

This section of the toolkit elaborates on each of the seven steps. It also provides information on media outreach tactics that require a little more effort, such as media events and getting into the media's editorial section. Regardless of how elaborate your effort is, this section will help you to work more effectively with the press and garner positive media coverage of hunger and nutrition issues and the Food Stamp Program.

Understanding that you may be working with limited staff resources, this section of the toolkit also includes tips and template materials to use when you contact the media.

TIPS & TOOLS

Placing stories in your local community's print and broadcast media can lead to bigger things. Frequently, statewide and national media outlets get story ideas from coverage at the local level. Do not be surprised if a story about food stamp outreach in your community is picked up by one of the major networks! Recently, a story about food stamp participation in local media outlets in Pennsylvania and Texas caught the eye of National Public Radio and led to an airing of a positive story about the Food Stamp Program.



STEP 1 | SELECT A TARGET AUDIENCE

Select your audience(s). Determine whom you are trying to reach before you begin your media outreach. Generally, you are trying to reach people who are eligible for food stamps but not receiving them. Specific examples include:

- People 60 years of age or older
- Children
- Families
- Working poor
- Immigrants

National research shows that the most underserved and hardest-to-reach populations tend to be seniors, immigrants, and the working poor. The audience for your community may vary. Talk to people in your local food stamp office to see whom they are trying to reach. Do your own research on underserved populations and the best methods to reach your selected audience(s). For more on this, see the Resources section of this toolkit.

GOALS

Before you begin your outreach, establish some simple goals for your effort. Examples include:

- **Educating people** about the nutrition benefits of food stamps
- **Increasing the number of calls** to the local, State, or national toll-free number
- **Increasing hits** on your web site
- **Promoting** the EBT card
- **Promoting extended hours** for food stamp application certification interviews

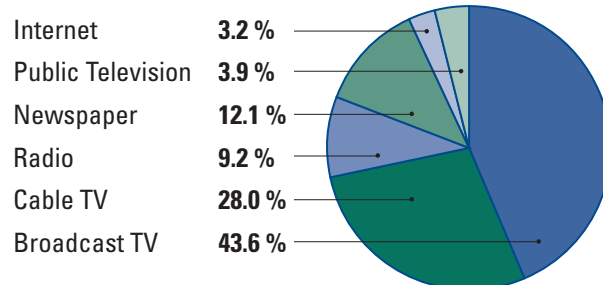
STEP 2 | DEVELOP A MEDIA LIST

Determine the best channels for reaching your target audience by researching the answers to the following questions. Then begin to create a media list, which is a list of local news media organizations and their contact information.

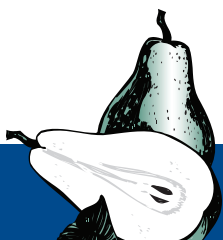
Does your target audience:

- Listen to certain radio stations?
- Watch particular TV channels?
- Read local community papers or daily newspapers?

MEDIA HABITS FOR HISPANIC AUDIENCE



Source: TVB, Neilson Media Research Survey 2003



Check with your partner organizations to see if they already have a list that they are willing to share.

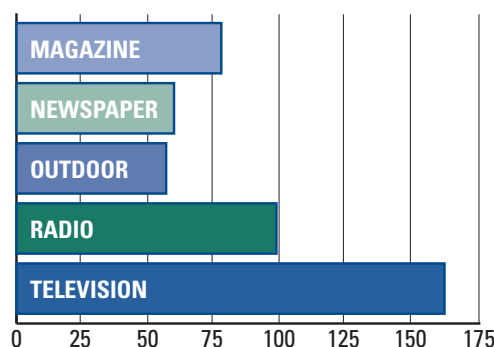
POINTERS TO DEVELOP A MEDIA LIST

- ✓ Check the local phone book for listings of television and radio stations, local daily and weekly newspapers, and magazines.
- ✓ Use the U.S. Newspaper List web site at www.usnpl.com.
- ✓ Check the local library for media reference books, such as the Bacon's Media Yellow Book or the News Media Yellow Book.
- ✓ Check newspaper and television web sites. Search their online archives to find names of reporters who have covered stories on food stamps, hunger, poverty, or nutrition in the past. Review the articles previously written or stories broadcast by the reporter to get a feel for her or his style and areas of interest.
- ✓ Ask your clients about their preferred local media sources.
- ✓ Add reporters' names to your list when you read a story or meet a reporter working on a story about hunger or community groups.
- ✓ Add the local offices or bureaus of national media organizations. These are typically located in State capitals or large cities. Wire services like the Associated Press (AP) (see page 57), Reuters, and the Scripps Howard News Service provide articles to local newspapers. Large radio and television networks also distribute stories to local affiliates. A listing of these is provided on page 58.

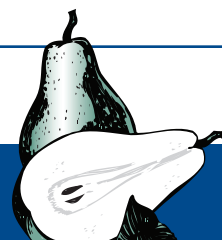
As you build your media list, add the names and contact information (phone, e-mail, fax, address) for specific individuals within each organization. These individuals may include reporters, editors, and/or producers. By appealing to specific individuals, you are more likely to get a response. Double-check to make sure your contact names are up-to-date. Call the main number of the newspaper or station and ask the operator for assistance.

On your list, also make note of publication deadlines so you can contact editors and reporters well in advance of when you hope to actually see your story in print.

MEDIA HABITS FOR HOUSEHOLDS UNDER 25K ANNUAL INCOME



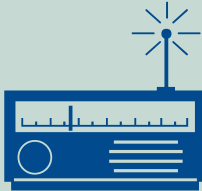


Source: Mediamark Fall 2003

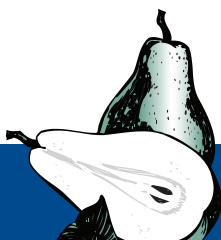


CHOOSING THE MOST APPROPRIATE CONTACT

There are a number of individuals within a news organization who shape what is printed or broadcast. People to include on your media list are:

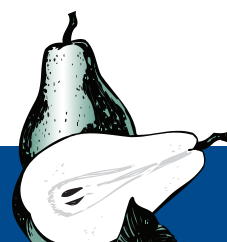
APPROPRIATE CONTACTS	
NEWSPAPER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporters who cover health, social, and family issues, • Writers for the calendar or community events page, • Community columnists, • Editorial page editors, and • Assignment editors who direct reporters or photographers to cover events. 	
TV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporters/on-air personalities, • Planning/assignment editors, • News broadcast producers, and • Producers of morning shows or community programs. 	
RADIO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News directors, • Assignment editors, • Public affairs show hosts and producers, and • On-air personalities or commentators. 	

Keep in mind that each media outlet may have a separate staff that writes for its web site, and remember to include smaller media outlets, such as local cable access TV stations, community newspapers, and local parenting magazines and tabloids.



SAMPLE MEDIA FILE

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Hon	First	Last	Organization	Title	Address 1	City	St	Zip	Phone	Fax	E-mail
Mr.	Bob	Cook	Akron Beacon Journal	Opinion Page Writer	12 Exchange Street	Akron	OH	44328	330-123-3000	330-123-9235	bcook@thebeaconjournal.com
Mr.	Tom	Farmer	Alameda Times-Star	Opinion Page Director	345 Sixth Street	Oakland	CA	94612-2601	510-456-6333	510-456-6487	tfarmer@angnewspapers.com
Mr.	Keith	Baker	Antelope Valley Press	Opinion Page Writer	78 Pepper Lane	Palmdale	CA	93590-4050	661-789-2700	661-789-4870	kbaker@avpress.com
Ms.	Jeanne	Gardener	Arizona Republic	Opinion Page Editor	900 Peachtree Blvd.	Phoenix	AZ	85004	602-101-8000	602-101-8933	kgardener@arizonarepublic.com
Mr.	Andrew	Rice	Asbury Park Press	Opinion Page Editor	123 Apple Way	Neptune	NJ	07754	732-234-6000	732-234-4818	arice@app.com
Mr.	David	Glass	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	Opinion Page Editor	4500 Water Street	Atlanta	GA	30303	404-567-5151	404-567-5611	dglass@ajc.com
Ms.	Carolyn	Spooner	Bellingham Herald	Opinion Page Editor	P.O. Box 678	Bellingham	WA	98227-1277	360-890-2600	360-890-2826	cspooner@bellinsh.gannett.com
Mr.	Donald	Newton	Boston Globe	Opinion Page Editor	910 Orchard Street	Boston	MA	02107-2378	617-987-2000	617-987-2098	dnewton@globe.com
Ms.	Ginger	Fisher	Boston Globe	Opinion Page Columnist	P.O. Box 120	Boston	MA	02107-2378	617-654-2000	617-654-2098	gfisher@globe.com
Ms.	Rosemary	Wheaton	Boston Globe	Opinion Page Editor	3400 Grocer Blvd.	Boston	MA	02107-2378	617-321-2000	617-321-2098	mwheaton@globe.com
Ms.	Christine	Miller	Boston Herald	Opinion Page Editor	56 Maple Avenue	Boston	MA	02106	617-246-3000	617-246-1315	cmiller@bostonherald.com
Mr.	Stewart	Brown	Boston Herald	Opinion Page Columnist	789 Honey Avenue	Boston	MA	02106	617-802-3000	617-802-1315	sbrown@bostonherald.com
Mr.	Herbert	Smith	Bradenton Herald	Opinion Page Editor	1000 Raspberry Way	Bradenton	FL	34206-0921	941-531-0411	941-531-7094	hsmith@bradentonherald.com
Ms.	Rosemary	Green	Bradenton Herald	Opinion Page Writer	P.O. Box 987	Bradenton	FL	34206-0921	941-579-0411	941-579-7094	rgreen@bradentonherald.com
Ms.	Olive	Johnson	Brattleboro Reformer	Opinion Page Editor	654 Sugar Way	Brattleboro	VT	05302-0802	802-234-2311	802-234-1305	ojohnson@sover.net
Mr.	Marc	Stover	Bucks County Courier Times	Opinion Page Editor	3200 Lime Avenue	Levittown	PA	19057	215-567-4000	215-567-4177	mstover@balkinsnewspapers.com
Mr.	Charles	Mills	Cape Cod Times	Opinion Page Editor	101 North 40th Street	Hyannis	MA	02601-4037	508-890-1200	508-890-3292	cmills@capecodonline.com
Mr.	Michael	Huntley	Chicago Sun-Times	Opinion Page Editor	234 River Avenue	Chicago	IL	60611-3532	312-876-3000	312-876-2120	mhuntley@suntimes.com
Ms.	Trudy	Black	Chicago Tribune	Opinion Page Editor	5600 Orchard Street	Chicago	IL	60611-4041	312-543-3232	312-543-2598	tblack@tribune.com
Ms.	Clara	Baker	Christian Science Monitor	Opinion Page Editor	780 Market Street	Boston	MA	02115	617-123-2000	617-123-7575	cbaker@csp.com
Ms.	Keith	White	Christian Science Monitor	Opinion Page Writer	900 Plains Blvd.	Boston	MA	02115	617-456-2000	617-456-7575	kwhite@csp.com
Ms.	Elizabeth	Rancher	Columbian	Opinion Page Writer	1000 Greenway Street	Vancouver	WA	98666-0180	360-789-3391	360-789-6031	mgumsey@columbian.com
Mr.	Mike	Gumsey	Columbian	Opinion Page Writer	200 Sowers Avenue	Vancouver	WA	98666-0180	360-102-3391	360-102-6031	esmith@columbian.com
Ms.	Elsie	Smith	Concord Monitor	Opinion Page Editor	340 Cooler Street	Concord	NH	03302-1177	603-345-5301	603-345-8120	ssummer@concordmonitor.com
Mr.	Stephen	Summer	Connecticut Post	Opinion Page Editor	560 Harvest Lane	Bridgeport	CT	06604-4560	203-678-0161	203-678-8158	swinter@ctpost.com
Mr.	David	Green	Conroe Courier	Opinion Page Editor	7800 Sugar Avenue	Conroe	TX	77305-0609	936-910-6671	936-910-6729	dgreen@conroecourier.com
Mr.	Harvey	Pine	Contra Costa Times	Opinion Page Editor	9100 Orange Lane	Walnut Creek	CA	94596	925-765-2525	925-765-0239	hpine@netcom.com
Mr.	Alan	Farmer	Courier-Post	Opinion Page Editor	2300 Culter Street	Cherry Hill	NJ	08002-2905	856-432-6000	856-432-2831	afarmer@courierpostonline.com
Mr.	John	Miller	Daily Camera	Opinion Page Editor	45000 Fig Lane	Boulder	CO	80306-0591	303-109-1202	303-109-1155	jmliller@thedailycamera.com
Mr.	Martin	Cook	Daily Local News	Opinion Page Editor	60 West Acres Street	West Chester	PA	19382-2800	610-876-1775	610-876-1180	mcook@dailylocal.com
Mr.	Buddy	Johns	Daily Record	Opinion Page Editor	700 Bloom Way	Parsippany	NJ	07054-0217	973-543-6200	973-543-6666	bjones@momisto.gannett.com
Mr.	Bill	Grower	Daily Republic	Opinion Page Editor	89 Beesley Street	Fairfield	CA	94533-0747	707-210-4646	707-210-5924	bgrower@dailyrepublic.com
Ms.	Violet	Pinter	Daily Times-Call	Opinion Page Editor	10 Apple Street	Longmont	CO	80502-0299	303-345-2244	303-345-8615	vpinter@dailytimescall.com
Mr.	Richard	Moos	Dallas Morning News	Opinion Page Editor	246 Market Lane	Dallas	TX	75202	214-678-8222	214-678-8319	rmoos@dallasnews.com
Ms.	Sheri	Coffee	Delaware State News	Opinion Page Editor	810 Peachtree Blvd.	Dover	DE	19903-0737	302-864-3600	302-864-8223	scoffee@newszap.com
Ms.	Jane	Gardener	Denton Record-Chronicle	Opinion Page Editor	135 Mercantile Lane	Denton	TX	76202-0369	940-642-3811	940-642-9666	kgardener@dentonrc.com
Mr.	Robert	Brown	Denver Post	Opinion Page Editor	79 Grainer Blvd.	Denver	CO	80202	303-420-1010	303-420-1369	rbrown@aol.com
Mr.	Merrill	Stover	Desert Dispatch	Opinion Page Editor	468 Orchard Way	Barstow	CA	92311-3289	760-975-2257	760-975-0685	mstover@link.freedom.com
Mr.	Ron	Fisher	Detroit Free Press	Opinion Page Editor	357 Pear Street	Detroit	MI	48226	313-753-6400	313-753-6774	rfisher@freepress.com
Mr.	Thomas	Cook	Detroit News	Opinion Page Columnist	5700 Ginger Lane	Detroit	MI	48226	313-531-6400	313-531-6417	tcCook@detnews.com
Ms.	Helen	Rice	Diario Las Americas	State News Editor	P.O. Box 9001	Miami	FL	33159-2698	305-213-3341	305-213-7668	hrice@diariolasamericas.com
Mr.	Craig	Glass	Eastside Journal	Opinion Page Editor	P.O. Box 123	Bellevue	WA	98009-9230	425-645-2222	425-645-0603	cglass@eastsidejournal.com
Ms.	Araceli	Wheaton	El Nuevo Herald	Opinion Page Editor	4501 Fisherman's Lane	Miami	FL	33132-1609	305-978-3535	305-978-2207	awheaton@herald.com
Ms.	Pam	Stover	Florida Today	Opinion Page Editor	5602 Corner Street	Melbourne	FL	32941-9000	321-867-3500	321-867-6620	pstover@brevard.gannett.com
Mr.	Bob	Hunt	Fort Worth Star-Telegram	Opinion Page Editor	6703 Cooks Avenue	Fort Worth	TX	76101	817-645-7400	817-645-7789	bhunt@star-telegram.com
Mr.	Paul	Stewart	Fort Worth Star-Telegram	Opinion Page Director	P.O. Box 7804	Fort Worth	TX	76101	817-312-7400	817-312-7789	pstewart@star-telegram.com
Ms.	Ann	Green	Gillette News-Record	Publisher	P.O. Box 8905	Gillette	WY	82717-3006	307-875-9306	307-875-9306	agreen@vcn.com
Mr.	Elliott	Golden	Gloucester County Times	Opinion Page Editor	9006 South Bend Street	Woodbury	NJ	08096-2488	856-942-3300	856-942-5480	egolden@sjnewsco.com
Mr.	Donovan	Budding	Greeley Tribune	Opinion Page Editor	123 Blossom Way	Greeley	CO	80632-1690	970-332-1690	970-332-1617	dbudding@greeleytrib.com
Mr.	Michael	Green	Greeley Tribune	Opinion Page Editor	123 Blossom Way	Greeley	CO	80632-1690	970-332-1690	970-332-1617	mgreen@greeleytrib.com



STEP 3

BRAINSTORM STORY IDEAS

Although much of the news covered on TV or in the newspaper is unanticipated, you can sometimes generate interest by calling the media with a compelling story.






What makes your story newsworthy?

Consider the aspects of a news story that kept you engaged and interested. Provide local statistics and stories and offer the reporter an interesting angle.

What are some examples of newsworthy stories?

- Launch of a new program.
- Start of a new outreach effort for a specific audience like seniors, immigrants such as Hispanics, or working poor.
- Information about an organization or a community leader who has recently shown interest in issues such as nutrition or food stamps.
- Community happenings that tie into food stamp issues, such as a factory closing or a new community partnership.

FIVE COMPONENTS OF A NEWSWORTHY STORY

	TIMING: The word <i>news</i> means exactly what it says: things that are new. In this electronic age, people are used to receiving immediate news updates. If it happened today, it's news. If the same thing happened last week, it's no longer interesting. Think ahead to upcoming actions, events, holiday or seasonal stories, and volunteer appreciation stories — and plan your media outreach in advance so reporters can get the story while it is still news.
	SIGNIFICANCE: The number of people affected by a story is important. If a significant number of people in your community are eligible for the Food Stamp Program, yet are not tapping into the benefits, this will be considered newsworthy.
	PROXIMITY: The closer the story hits to home, the more newsworthy it is.
	PROMINENCE: Famous people get more coverage simply because they are famous. But celebrities do not have to come from Hollywood — they can be local politicians, prominent business owners, hometown sports heroes, or key community leaders.
	HUMAN INTEREST: Human interest stories appeal to the readers' emotions. Talking about the benefits of food stamps through a first-person account is a good way to personalize what readers or viewers might otherwise think is merely a government program that has no relevancy to their lives.



STEP 4 | PREPARE MATERIALS AND INFORMATION

Once you have your story idea, get ready to present it to your local media.

How do I prepare my story?

Start by preparing any new materials and collecting background information. You might wish to check with your local food stamp office to see whether they have information you can use that is specific to your community.

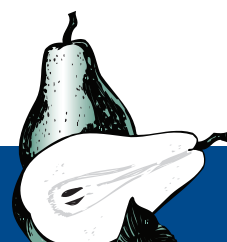
In some cases, you might not need to develop any media materials. You may simply call or e-mail a reporter with your pitch (see step 6).

If your story idea is time-sensitive or about a piece of breaking news, develop a press release.

Sample media materials are provided in the media relations section.

EXAMPLES OF MEDIA MATERIALS THAT MAY NEED TO BE PREPARED

- ☑ **PRESS RELEASE:** A 1–2 page document with information about your news. Press releases should be issued only for timely and significant happenings.
- ☑ **MEDIA ADVISORY:** A 1-page document that lists enough information to pique a reporter's interest without giving away the whole story. Usually, these are sent out before media events (see pages 64-67 for more information).
- ☑ **PITCH LETTER:** A brief letter that presents your story idea.
- ☑ **FACT SHEET:** A document with statistical information about your news.
- ☑ **BIOGRAPHIES:** Background information about your spokespeople.
- ☑ **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ):** Information about food stamps, hunger, nutrition issues, and so forth, including such information as locations of local food stamp offices, the local toll-free number, and extended office hours or online applications.
- ☑ **GRAPHICS:** Charts on local enrollment trends, participation, or numbers of people who are eligible, but not participating.



STEP 5 | IDENTIFY SPOKESPERSONS

OFFICIAL SPOKESPERSONS

Identify people whom the media can interview about the story. These may be local health experts, nutritionists, grocers, or human services providers. Be sure you have the full name, title, and contact information of these individuals readily available. Be sure that your spokespersons are approved by their organizations to speak to the media, and that they:

- Know the Food Stamp Program;
- Are available to appear on television or radio and to be interviewed by the print press;
- Are comfortable speaking to media;
- Are able to clearly communicate the point you want to get across;
- Can respond effectively to questions; and
- Will be considered credible, trustworthy sources of information by viewers or readers.

TESTIMONIALS

To add a human interest angle to the story, try to find people in your community who would be willing to share their food stamp benefits stories with the media and talk about how the support helped them get back on their feet. Speak to your partners to see if they can help identify someone like this.

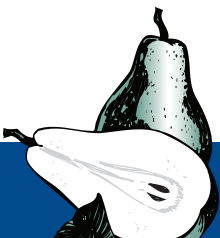
Once someone has been selected, make sure the person is comfortable telling his or her story and has a positive experience to share. You will also need to confirm with the media outlet whether or not they have to use the true identity of the person giving the testimonial. A food stamp recipient may be uncomfortable using his or her name; some individuals might want to use an alias and others might want to just use their first name.

STEP 6 | CONTACT THE MEDIA

What are some helpful tips on contacting reporters?

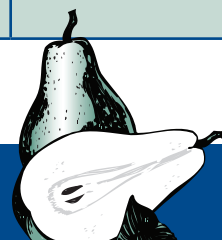
- **Select the most appropriate reporters for your specific story.** Do not bombard reporters with story ideas that are not relevant to the reporter's beat or specialty. For example, if you are pitching a story about the economic benefits of the Food Stamp Program, contact the reporter on your media list who covers the local economy.
- **Find out how reporters like to be contacted and respect their time.** Ask if a reporter prefers phone

calls, e-mail, or news the old-fashioned way — by U.S. mail. Reporters may keep odd hours and juggle several assignments at once. Be respectful of their schedules and how they like to receive information. If you need to send out a press release or media advisory to a mass list rather than individual names, be sure to put e-mail addresses in the blind copy (bcc:) field to avoid sharing e-mail addresses with all the other recipients.



- **Review your talking points before you call reporters.** Have your ideas ready (see page 61 for a pitch script sample) since most reporters are extremely busy and will give you only a minute or so to make your case before deciding if they are interested.
- **Make sure your e-mail subject line is descriptive but concise.** Include a short (about two paragraphs), catchy pitch along with your contact information. (See sample at the end of this section.) Make the reporter's job as easy as possible by providing the most important information in the first paragraph. Include a link to the FSP web page (www.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/htm), as a reporter will often visit the web site for insight before calling back.
- **Avoid using all caps or excessive punctuation.** Reporters avoid anything that looks like unsolicited e-mail or "spam." Avoid using attachments when contacting a reporter for the first time, as he or she may suspect the attachment of containing a computer virus. Copy and paste relevant text into the body of the e-mail.
- **Introduce yourself fully on phone calls.** Reference previous conversations, if applicable, to jog their memory as to who you are and why you're calling. Ask whether it is a good time to talk. If they cannot talk, offer to call back later at their convenience. If they have time to talk, get to your point quickly and gauge their level of interest based on the response. If they are not interested, they will let you know.

TIMING YOUR OUTREACH		
TYPE OF OUTLETS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING
MONTHLIES	Monthly publications are typically magazines, often designed to appeal to a particular segment of the community. They are not as focused on time-sensitive news events, and are therefore good channels for communicating "big picture" stories and features.	Stories created for monthlies must often be written 3 to 6 months prior to publication date.
WEEKLIES	Weeklies can come in a magazine or newspaper format, and often are distributed free at grocery stores or other popular community locations.	Plan on contacting weeklies 2 to 6 weeks before you hope to see your story in print.
DAILIES	Dailies are defined as local newspapers that focus on breaking news, although they are also good outlets for in-depth features.	For feature stories, plan on contacting dailies 2 to 3 weeks before you hope to see your story in print.
BROADCAST	Broadcast outlets include television and radio. Broadcast news tends to provide live coverage of news events, and relies on images or audio sound bites to tell the story. Broadcast outlets can also be interested in longer stories, particularly for morning or community shows.	For feature-length stories, contact the producer of the segment you are pitching 2 to 3 weeks before you hope to see your story on the air.



- **Be reliable.** Nothing will squelch a media relationship faster than a promise you cannot deliver. Do your best to get reporters what they need in advance of their deadlines. However, if you won't be able to come through, let them know as early as possible.
- **Follow up.** Although some reporters will provide coverage after one phone interview, that is frequently not enough. It is important to be in front of reporters on a consistent basis with compelling information that demonstrates what you are pitching is viable, credible, and worthy of coverage. Be sure to offer reporters the additional elements they would need to round out their stories — photos, web site information, toll-free numbers, listing of local food stamp offices, and additional resources, if necessary.
- **Know when to keep at it and when to let go.** No matter how passionate you are about a story, some reporters will never buy in. A good way to circumvent a quick “no” is to pitch by phone rather than e-mail (unless that is a reporter's preference). This will get you better results and allow you to build the relationships you need to ensure consistent success. When using the phone, leave one message only, and then continue to call at different times of the day until you are able to speak to the reporters. Once you have them on the line, it is much easier to make your case, as you can engage a reporter in a conversation and handle questions or objections as they arise.

WHAT ARE REPORTERS' DEADLINES?

PRINT:

Call a newsroom between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when reporters are most likely not in planning meetings or working against a 5 p.m. deadline.



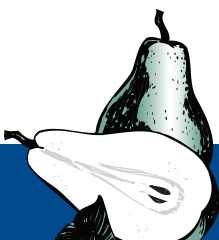
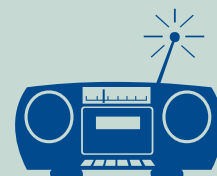
TELEVISION:

Call assignment or planning editors after 10 a.m. and before 3 p.m., but not in the hour or so before a noon newscast. It's best to call the assignment desk after the morning planning meeting, which usually ends between 9:30 and 10 a.m.



RADIO:

Call early, around 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. After that, staff often has planning meetings, but you can start calling again after 10 a.m. News directors, reporters, and producers are often gone by the afternoon.



STEP 7 | EVALUATE

Reviewing and analyzing your media outreach allows you to determine whether you reached your goals and what did and didn't work. It also gives you an opportunity to share your success. The end result need not be an exhaustive report, just some information to help you track your efforts.

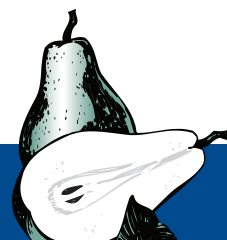
How can I chart our media outreach efforts?

- **Set goals before you begin** so that you have something to measure (for example, place one newspaper article or TV story about food stamp benefits, promote the local toll-free number, or increase inquiries about food stamps by 10 percent).
- **Establish a starting point** (known as a baseline), if possible. Take note of how many calls you are getting about food stamps, or how much media coverage you are receiving now. If you do this, you can quantify improvements and increases.
- **Begin your analysis as soon as possible** after your media push or event so that everything is fresh in your mind.
- **Use numbers to paint your success story:** "There was a 50-percent increase in media coverage compared to last year," or, "After our appearance on the local radio show, calls about food stamp benefits increased by 20 percent."
- **Use anecdotal evidence to show your success:** "Many clients remarked that they didn't think they would be eligible for food stamps until they saw the TV story." In addition, use quotes from clients that support your success: "I was surprised to learn that I might still qualify for food stamps even though I have a job."
- **Include information on the reach of a media outlet:** "An article ran in the Anytown News, which has a circulation of 80,000." This information is usually available on the media outlet's web site.
- **Look at what is said in the media coverage you receive to determine whether you communicated your key points.** If you wanted to convey that every accommodation is being made to help elderly people apply for benefits, did that come across in your story?
- **Make copies of the newspaper articles that include your contributions.** Make sure they are well presented. Keep a file of media coverage that you can easily access.
- **Share articles with partners,** or incorporate articles in a presentation folder for potential partners.

How do I monitor for media coverage?

Following are some quick and easy ways to monitor coverage on a shoestring budget:

- Check the outlet's web site. Most searches are free for any time up to a week or month.
- If you submitted an announcement to a newsletter or bulletin, ask about distribution numbers, so you get a rough estimate of how many people read your message.
- If you know a TV story will air at a certain time, record the segment.
- To find out the circulation or audience numbers for newspapers and TV, check the outlet's web site. If you need to call to ask for this information, the advertising department will usually give it to you.



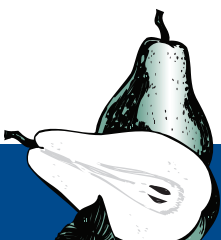
What are some additional media tracking resources?

- **U.S. Newspaper List:** A comprehensive list of State and local media outlets. Once on the site, click on your State and then city for shortcuts to your community papers and television stations. www.usnpl.com/
- **NewsIndex:** The web's first news-only search engine; cost is \$20/month. www.newsindex.com/delivered.html
- **HandsNet:** Offers WebClipper, a reasonably priced service targeted at nonprofits and the human services community. <http://webclipper.handsnet.org/mt-static/>
- **NewzGroup:** Provides comprehensive statewide press clipping services of all daily and weekly newspapers in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Basic coverage is about \$100/month. <http://209.43.121.4/index.html>
- **Lexis-Nexis:** This is probably the most comprehensive online database of full-text news and magazine articles, but it is also among the most expensive of the available services. www.lexisnexis.com/
- **Google News:** A "beta" (test) offering at the time of this printing, this is a free search engine especially for news stories. <http://news.google.com/nwshp?hl=en+gl=us>

HOW DO I CREATE A FILE OF MEDIA COVERAGE?



1. **Locate** either an online or print copy of the story.
2. **Cut out** or print off the title of the publication (also known as the flag, logotype, or masthead).
3. **Make sure** the date and byline (reporter's name) are included on the article. If one or the other is not included on the printed version, type the date and byline (sometimes the byline will be "Staff" or "Reuters") on a separate piece of paper; cut it out.
4. **Lay the components out** on a white, blank piece of paper in the following order: flag, byline, date, and content.
5. **Tape the components** neatly onto your blank paper; make sure the edges are not folded.



10 TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEDIA OUTREACH

- 1 Identify who you want to reach.** Who is your target audience? Do you want to reach all eligible nonparticipants, or do you want to focus on a specific audience, such as seniors or the Latino community?
- 2 Determine the best way to reach them.** Does your target audience read community newspapers? Do they watch TV? What time of day are they watching TV? Do they listen to the radio? Make a list of the relevant media outlets and reporters.
- 3 Set simple objectives.** What do you want to achieve through media outreach? For example, do you want to increase inquiries to the toll-free number, inform people about the nutrition benefits of food stamps?
- 4 Think about the best timing for your story.** Does your news need to be released immediately? Would it be better to wait for a more opportune time such as after the holidays when people are struggling to make ends meet?
- 5 Think about what you want to say.** Formulate the message that you want to communicate to your target audience, e.g., promote toll-free number, extended office hours, the nutrition benefits of food stamps.
- 6 Think about ways to make your story interesting.** Can you get real-life testimonials from Food Stamp Program participants? Could a statewide story be tied into your pitch?
- 7 Determine how you are going to communicate your message.** Will you simply call the reporter and provide background information? Do you need to put together a press release or host a press conference?
- 8 Determine who is going to say it.** Do you have people lined up that reporters can speak to, like a food stamp office director, a food bank supervisor, or a nutritionist?
- 9 Be targeted in your media outreach.** Your pitch will be more effective if you reach the right person. Spend some time reading, watching, and listening to the media outlets you will pitch and recent coverage by the reporter you will be contacting. How far in advance do you need to reach out? What time of day would work best? Do reporters prefer e-mail or a phone call?
- 10 Evaluate your results.** Reviewing and analyzing your media outreach lets you know if you reached your goals and what did and did not work. Share your success with others!

